

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07
IO-13 TRSE-00 /079 W

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R 071334Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9442

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 8424

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, PO, SP

SUBJ: SOARES PASSES UP PSOE CONGRESS

SUMMARY: PS INSIDERS TELL US THAT PRIME MINISTER
SOARES DECIDED NOT TO ATTEND THE PSOE CONGRESS
IN MADRID TO AVOID COMPLICATING BILATERAL RELATIONS
WITH SPAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. SOARES PASSES UP PSOE CONGRESS: PRIME MINISTER
MARIO SOARES DID NOT ATTEND THE MADRID CONGRESS OF
THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY (PSOE). THE
PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS SENT A DELEGATION HEADED BY
PARLIAMENTARY LEADER FRANCISCO SALGADO ZENHA AND
INCLUDING SOARES'S WIFE, MARIA BARROSO; INTERNATIONAL
SECRETARY RUI MATEUS; AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER
EDUARDO SOUSA SANTOS.

2. ZENHA EXPLAINS ABSENCE: PS DELEGATION CHIEF
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ZENHA PARRIED PRESS INQUIRIES BY POINTING OUT THAT
THE PSOE DID NOT INVITE THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT,

BUT RATHER THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY WHICH HAD NAMED THE DELEGATION WHICH HE HEADED. ZENHA NOTED THAT NO SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT HEADS ATTENDED THE PSOE CONGRESS. HE ADDED THAT PORTUGAL WAS GOING THROUGH AN IMPORTANT PERIOD WITH THE CAMPAIGN FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS IN ITS FINAL WEEK. THE CAMPAIGN PLUS GOVERNMENTAL OBLIGATIONS, HE STRESSED, PREVENTED SOARES FROM BEING PRESENT.

3. GAMA TELLS IT LIKE IT IS: PS INSIDER JAIME GAMA TOLD EMBOFF DEC 6 THAT SOARES'S ABSENCE WAS DUE PRINCIPALLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S DESIRE NOT TO COMPLICATE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. GAMA SAID SOARES WAS MUCH IMPRESSED WITH SPANISH PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO LISBON. FOR THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALISTS FACTS WERE FACTS. SPAIN WAS THE ONLY EUROPEAN COUNTRY WITH WHICH PORTUGAL SHARED A COMMON BORDER. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO KEEP THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN GOOD REPAIR.

4. COMMENT: SOARES'S DECISION NOT TO ATTEND THE PSOE CONGRESS WAS DELAYED UNTIL THE ELEVENTH HOUR. RUI MATEUS TOLD US ON DEC 3 THAT SOARES WAS STILL WEIGHING HIS DECISION AND THAT RESERVATIONS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER HAD BEEN MADE FOR DEPARTURE ON DEC 4 IN CASE SOARES DECIDED TO GO. BOTH MATEUS AND GAMA CONCEDED THAT SOARES'S FAILURE TO ATTEND WOULD NOT BE WELL RECEIVED BY THE PSOE. ZENHA TOLD THE PRESS THAT SOARES'S ATTENDANCE HAD NOT EVEN BEEN RAISED BY THE SPANISH SOCIALISTS. PRESSED BY COMMUNIST-LINING "O DIARIO," HE SAID IT WAS A "BOURGEOIS IDEA" TO THINK THAT MARIO SOARES COUNTED FOR MORE THAN OTHER LEADERS OF THE PARTY. ZENHA REITERATED THAT URGENT MATTERS IN PORTUGAL PREVENTED SOARES'S DEPARTURE, ADDING THAT, "WITH DUE MODESTY THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY WAS AS WELL REPRESENTED BY MYSELF AS BY SOARES." IT IS CONFIDENTIAL
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UNLIKELY THAT FILIPE GONZALES AND HIS PSOE COLLEAGUES WOULD AGREE.
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